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TAGS: PARM, NATO, CSCE, MBFR
SUBJECT: SENATE HEARINGS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ON FEBRUARY 18, 1988, CHARLES H. THOMAS, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND CANADIAN AFFAIRS AND U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO NATO'S HIGH LEVEL TASK FORCE ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL, TESTIFIED IN OPEN HEARINGS BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE. TEXT OF MR. THOMAS' OPENING STATEMENT FOLLOWS IN PARA 7 BELOW. ENSUING QUESTIONS FROM SENATORS NUNN, WARNER, AND WIRTH FOCUSED ON LINKAGE OF POSSIBLE CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL ACCORDS TO OTHER ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS AND PROGRESS ON CSCE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, FORCE STRUCTURE/POSTURE CONSIDERATIONS, STATUS OF USG AND ALLIANCE DELIBERATIONS ON A SUBSTANTIVE CONVENTIONAL STABILITY PROPOSAL, AND THE "TRIPLE ZERO" IN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH REFERENCE TO OUR DESIRE FOR A BALANCED OUTCOME AT THE VIENNA CSCE MEETING, NUNN WONDERED HOW MUCH LEVERAGE WE IN FACT HAVE WITH THE EAST. HE ASKED IF THE SOVIETS REALLY DO WANT TO NEGOTIATE ON CONVENTIONAL FORCES WHEN THE BALANCE IS SO MUCH IN THEIR FAVOR. THOMAS REPLIED THAT, ALTHOUGH WE ARE UNCERTAIN OF THEIR MOTIVES, THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR BOTH IN VIENNA AND IN MOSCOW THAT THEY WANT TO MOVE QUICKLY TO BEGIN FORMAL CONVENTIONAL STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS.

3. NUNN EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE, BOTH WITHIN USG CIRCLES AND AT NATO, ON DEVELOPING AN ALLIANCE SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED AGAINST AGREEING TO AN ALLIED PROPOSAL WHICH MIGHT NOT GIVE THE U.S. SOME FLEXIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE TROOP REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE NECESSITATED BY BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS OVER THE COMING YEARS. THOMAS INDICATED WE HAVE TRIED TO LOOK AT THE LONG TERM IN DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL SO AS TO ENSURE WE COULD LIVE WITH IT SOME YEARS DOWN THE LINE. ALL OF THE ALLIES WERE FACING BUDGET PROBLEMS, NOT JUST THE U.S. IN ADDITION, MANY WERE CONFRONTED WITH ADVERSE DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS WHICH HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. NUNN THEN SUGGESTED THE ALLIANCE LOOK AT WAYS TO "FRONT END" SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN ANY FIRST PHASE, SINCE HE FOUND

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IT HARD TO ENVISAGE ANY EASTERN ATTACK BEING LED BY NON-SOVIET WARSAW PACT FORCES. THOMAS SAID ALLIED DISCUSSIONS HAD FOCUSED IN PART ON THE QUESTION OF STATIONED FORCES. WARNER LATER ASKED IF SOME ALLIANCE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS PROPOSAL MIGHT BE EXPECTED AT THE MARCH SUMMIT. THOMAS REPLIED THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN ALLIANCE STATEMENT ON CONVENTIONAL SECURITY AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1986 BRUSSELS DECLARATION.

4. NOTING HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO FIVE NATO CAPITALS AS PART OF CODEL BYRD, WARNER SAID HE DETECTED SOME APPREHENSION THAT GORBACHEV MIGHT ANNOUNCE SOME UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES FROM EASTERN EUROPE TO CAPTURE THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION. THOMAS RESPONDED THAT THIS SPECTER HAD LOOMED FOR SOME TIME, BUT HAD NOT YET MATERIALIZED. SUCH A STEP COULD RESULT IN THEIR LOSING SOME LEVERAGE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE NO EQUIVALENT WESTERN MOVE WOULD BE REQUIRED. HE RECALLED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MADE SIMILAR MOVES IN THE PAST, E.G., REPORTEDLY PULLING 20,000 TROOPS OUT OF THE GDR; BUT HAD NOT GAINED MUCH ON THE POLITICAL FRONT SINCE THE WITHDRAWAL WAS NOT VERIFIABLE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE "THIRD ZERO" OPTION, WARNER INDICATED HE HAD FOUND STRONG INTEREST IN THE FRG FOR PARALLEL NEGOTIATIONS ON SNF. HE STATED HIS FIRM OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS BEING INCLUDED IN THE CONVENTIONAL STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS AND WOULD SO TELL CHANCELLOR KOHL WHO WOULD BE VISITING CAPITOL HILL THAT SAME DAY. WIRTH LATER EXPRESSED DOUBT NATO COULD PREVENT THE WARSAW PACT FROM SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF THE STABILITY TALKS FROM CONVENTIONAL FORCES TO SNF. SAYING HE BELIEVED ALLIED PUBLICS HAD ALREADY FORGOTTEN NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS UNDERTAKEN FOLLOWING MONTEBELLO, WIRTH URGED THE ALLIANCE TO DEVELOP COUNTER-PROPOSALS TO LIKELY GORBACHEV INITIATIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, NEGOTIATIONS ON NUCLEAR ARTILLERY ROUNDS MIGHT BE PROPOSED. THOMAS DISAGREED ON THE AMOUNT OF EUROPEAN INTEREST IN THE "THIRD ZERO", BUT INDICATED WE WERE LOOKING AT WAYS TO DEAL WITH POSSIBLE PUBLIC INTEREST IN SNF NEGOTIATIONS.

6. RETURNING TO THE ELEMENTS OF A SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSAL, NUNN SUGGESTED WE SEEK AGREEMENT EARLY ON ON A VERIFICATION REGIME TO HELP INCREASE WARNING TIME. HE FORESAW NEGOTIATIONS PROCEEDING ALONG TWO TRACKS: REDUCTIONS AND VERIFICATION (INCLUDING OTHER STABILITY MEASURES). THOMAS RESPONDED THAT WE WERE NOT SO CONCERNED WITH THE NEGOTIABILITY OF VERIFICATION MEASURES AS WITH THEIR ACCEPTABILITY. WE WERE LOOKING AT WHAT WE WOULD NEED TO VERIFY AND MONITOR WHAT WILL BE A VERY COMPLEX AGREEMENT. IN THAT REGARD, WE NEED TO EXPLOIT SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT MORE INTRUSIVE MEASURES. HE AGREED WITH NUNN'S VIEW THAT THE ALLIANCE NEED NOT SEEK TO NEGOTIATE AN ENTIRE PACKAGE AT THE SAME TIME. INDEED, THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES HAD TALKED OF AN EARLY DATA EXCHANGE, A KEY ELEMENT OF ANY VERIFICATION REGIME. RETURNING TO NUNN'S INITIAL POINT, THOMAS SAID WE HAD UNDER CONSIDERATION A SYSTEM OF PERMANENT NATO OBSERVERS STATIONED AT KEY RAIL AND HIGHWAY NODES IN THE EAST. SHOULD THEY REPORT ANY UNTOWARD MOBILIZATION ACTIVITY, THIS WOULD MAKE THE POLITICAL DECISIONS BY NATO LEADERS TO MOBILIZE IN RESPONSE THAT MUCH EASIER TO TAKE.

7. BEGIN TEXT OF PDAS THOMAS' PREPARED STATEMENT:

TITLE: CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL: WHERE WE ARE IN NATO

I AM PLEASED, MR. CHAIRMAN, TO REVIEW WITH YOU THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL. MY LAST

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OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN YOU WAS NOVEMBER 3RD OF LAST YEAR BEFORE SENATOR LEVIN'S SUBCOMMITTEE. MY STATEMENT THEN PROVIDED A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THIS ADMINISTRATION'S ORIENTATION TO THE CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL CHALLENGE WE FACE.

IMPLICATIONS OF INF

SINCE THAT TESTIMONY, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENTS. FIRST, PRESIDENT REAGAN AND GENERAL

SECRETARY GORBACHEV SIGNED THE INF TREATY ON DECEMBER 8. AS YOU KNOW, WE BELIEVE THE INF AGREEMENT IS A MILESTONE IN OUR DRIVE FOR IMPROVED WESTERN SECURITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT HAS NOT AMELIORATED -- OR EXACERBATED -- THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE WE HAVE LIVED WITH, AND STRUGGLED TO REMOVE, FOR MANY DECADES. WHAT INF HAS DONE IS TO FOCUS RENEWED ATTENTION ON THE CONVENTIONAL SITUATION AND THEREBY TO ELEVATE THE POLITICAL SALIENCE OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM THROUGH A COMBINATION OF ARMS CONTROL AND DEFENSE IMPROVEMENTS. WE THINK THIS IS A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT, BUT IT DOES NOT ALTER THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING EARLY, UNQUALIFIED RATIFICATION OF THE INF TREATY.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE STABILITY MANDATE

SECOND, WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS TOWARD AN AGREED EAST-WEST NEGOTIATING MANDATE FOR NEW CONVENTIONAL STABILITY TALKS THAT WOULD COVER CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE URALS. ON DECEMBER 14, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 16 NATO NATIONS AND THE SEVEN WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, WHO HAVE BEEN MEETING IN VIENNA SINCE FEBRUARY 1987, AGREED ON THE KEY "OBJECTIVES AND METHODS" SECTION OF THE STABILITY MANDATE.

CONSISTENT WITH THE ORIGINAL NATO POSITION, EASTERN AND WESTERN NEGOTIATORS AGREED THAT THE OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE:

-- TO ESTABLISH A STABLE AND SECURE BALANCE OF CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES AT LOWER LEVELS;

-- TO ELIMINATE DISPARITIES PREJUDICIAL TO STABILITY AND SECURITY; AND,

-- TO ELIMINATE, AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY, THE CAPABILITY FOR LAUNCHING SURPRISE ATTACK AND LARGE-SCALE OFFENSIVE ACTION (A CAPABILITY NATO NEITHER HAS NOR ASPIRES TO).

THE PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT REDUCTIONS, LIMITATIONS, REDEPLOYMENTS, EQUAL CEILINGS, AND RELATED MEASURES WERE AMONG THE METHODS AVAILABLE TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES.

ROUND THREE OF THE EAST-WEST MANDATE TALKS BEGAN ON JANUARY 28. ATTENTION HAS TURNED TO THE "SCOPE" SECTION OF THE MANDATE -- THAT IS, THE DESCRIPTION OF FORCES TO BE NEGOTIATED. THE NATO COUNTRIES ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH ALL CONVENTIONAL FORCES, INCLUDING CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS AND EQUIPMENT, BASED ON LAND. NAVAL, NUCLEAR, AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS WOULD BE EXCLUDED. THE EAST, HOWEVER, IS STILL PRESSING TO INCLUDE EUROPEAN-BASED NUCLEAR FORCES.

THE ALLIANCE IS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO COMPLICATING FUTURE CONVENTIONAL STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS IN THIS WAY. WE WILL NOT ALLOW THE WARSAW PACT TO SHIFT THE FOCUS OF THE TALKS FROM THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE, THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF INSTABILITY IN EUROPE. IF THE SOVIET UNION IS TRULY INTERESTED IN ARMS CONTROL PROGRESS, IT WILL AGREE TO DEAL WITH THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE ON ITS OWN TERMS, WITH NO NUCLEAR STRINGS ATTACHED.

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OTHER ISSUES REMAIN TO BE AGREED. FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT TERRITORY, PRECISELY, IS MEANT BY "ATLANTIC TO THE URALS"? THIS NEEDS TO BE WORKED OUT BY NEGOTIATORS IN SOME DETAIL. FURTHERMORE, THERE MUST BE EAST-WEST AGREEMENT ON THE MODALITIES OF EXCHANGING VIEWS WITH THE NEUTRAL AND NONALIGNED COUNTRIES, WHICH ARE FULL CSCE PARTICIPANTS BUT (BECAUSE THEIR FORCES ARE NOT AT STAKE) WILL NOT PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS.

ULTIMATELY, WE EXPECT THESE ISSUES TO YIELD TO NEGOTIATION. BUT, WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO THE EAST -- THE SOVIETS IN PARTICULAR -- THAT OUR ABILITY TO PROCEED WITH THE CONVENTIONAL STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS DEPENDS ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A BALANCED RESULT TO THE VIENNA CSCE FOLLOW-UP MEETING. THIS INCLUDES SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED COMPLIANCE WITH THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT PROVISIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.

NATO'S SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH TO THE STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS

THE ALLIANCE HAS REGISTERED PROGRESS IN A THIRD AREA -- OUR SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH TO THE STABILITY NEGOTIATIONS. IN MY LAST TESTIMONY, I OUTLINED A NUMBER OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS GUIDING OUR APPROACH. THESE ARE STILL OPERATIVE, BUT WE HAVE MOVED FURTHER ALONG IN OUR THINKING. CONSISTENT WITH THE AGREED OBJECTIVE OF ELIMINATING THE CAPABILITY FOR SURPRISE ATTACK AND THE INITIATION OF LARGE-SCALE OFFENSIVE ACTION, WE HAVE RESOLVED TO:

O FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES, AS THE FORCES WHICH CAN SEIZE AND HOLD TERRITORY AND WHICH HAVE BEEN THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTS OF INTIMIDATION AND OCCUPATION IN EASTERN EUROPE;

O CHALLENGE THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES TO ELIMINATE DISPARITIES IN THE MOST THREATENING ELEMENTS OF GROUND COMBAT POWER (TANKS AND ARTILLERY, FOR EXAMPLE), PARTICULARLY IN CENTRAL EUROPE;

O PROPOSE FORCE CUTS THAT NOT ONLY REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY SOVIET FORCES IN EASTERN EUROPE, BUT ALSO DIMINISH THE CAPABILITIES FOR FORCE GENERATION FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION THROUGHOUT THE ATLANTIC-TO-THE-URALS AREA;

O SEEK AN OUTCOME BASED ON EQUALITY THROUGHOUT THE ZONE. EQUAL REDUCTIONS, AS THE WARSAW PACT SUGGESTED IN THE BUDAPEST APPEAL OF 1986, WILL NOT ELIMINATE THE IMBALANCES WHICH THREATEN STABILITY IN EUROPE. EQUAL RESULTS WILL BE OUR FOCUS; THIS WILL REQUIRE HIGHLY ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS BY THE EAST;

O DESIGN OTHER STABILIZING MEASURES TO ENHANCE STABILITY THROUGH INCREASED OPENNESS, WARNING, AND CALCULABILITY OF MILITARY BEHAVIOR;

O ESTABLISH A RIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE VERIFICATION REGIME, INCLUDING THE EXCHANGE OF DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT FORCES AND DEPLOYMENTS, AS WELL AS ON-SITE INSPECTIONS AS A MATTER OF RIGHT AND ROUTINE.

WHAT WE SHOULD EXPECT FROM CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

IN CLOSING, LET ME INJECT A NOTE OF REALISM ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT EXPECT CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL TO DO FOR US. FIRST, ARMS CONTROL CANNOT ELIMINATE THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN EASTERN AND WESTERN POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND IN THE NATURE OF OUR TWO ALLIANCES.

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ULTIMATELY, IT IS THESE DIVERGENCES THAT UNDERLIE THE MILITARY CONFRONTATION ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT. AS LONG AS PEOPLES AND NATIONS ARE DIVIDED BY ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ABUSED IN THE EAST, THERE WILL BE EAST-WEST TENSIONS, OF WHICH ARMAMENTS ARE A REFLECTION.

SECOND, ARMS CONTROL CANNOT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMPROVEMENTS. NATO MUST SHOW CONTINUED DETERMINATION TO REDUCE THE THREAT WE FACE THROUGH A PROGRAM OF DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS. WE ARE CONTINUING TO WORK TO IMPROVE CONVENTIONAL FORCES THROUGH:

O IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE IMPROVEMENTS (CDI) ACTION PLAN ADOPTED IN 1985, WHICH HAS HIGHLIGHTED KEY DEFICIENCIES AND IDENTIFIED THOSE AREAS WHERE THE GREATEST RETURN ON OUR DEFENSE INVESTMENT IS POSSIBLE;

O CLOSER COOPERATION AND COORDINATION DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE GREATER EFFECTIVENESS IN THE APPLICATION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES TO DEFENSE IN A TIME OF INCREASED BUDGETARY

CONSTRAINTS;

O SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRIBUTION THE NATO CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS PLANNING SYSTEM (NATO CAPS) WILL MAKE TO DEFENSE PLANNING AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES DEVOTED TO RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, PROCUREMENT, AND PRODUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT;

O SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR ARMAMENTS COOPERATION PROJECTS, THROUGH FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE INNOVATIVE LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, AND YOUR COLLEAGUES, SENATORS ROTH AND WARNER, AND EFFORTS TO STREAMLINE TRANS-ATLANTIC COOPERATIVE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES, SUCH AS SENATOR QUAYLE'S TIMELY AMENDMENT;

O PROVISION OF ADEQUATE DEFENSE EXPENDITURES; AND,

O HELPING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE LESS ADVANTAGED ALLIES IN STRENGTHENING THEIR CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES.

NATO NEEDS TO PURSUE THIS PROGRAM VIGOROUSLY WHETHER OR NOT WE ACHIEVE ARMS CONTROL RESULTS. THE SOVIET UNION IS UNLIKELY TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY TO REDRESS DISPARITIES IF NATO IS UNWILLING TO PURSUE CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMPROVEMENTS. NATO MUST ALSO STRENGTHEN ITS CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN ORDER TO PREVENT UNDUE RELIANCE ON THE THREAT OF EARLY NUCLEAR USE IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET CONVENTIONAL AGGRESSION.

THIRD, CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL CANNOT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE THAT POSE A CREDIBLE THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION AND THE REST OF THE WARSAW PACT SHOULD THE EAST INITIATE AGGRESSION. THE NATURE OF THE EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP AND HISTORY OFFER NO CONFIDENCE THAT CONVENTIONAL FORCES ALONE COULD PREVENT WAR. EVEN IF THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE WERE TO DISAPPEAR, NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD STILL BE REQUIRED IN WESTERN EUROPE.

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, HOWEVER, WE CAN EXPECT ARMS CONTROL TO AFFORD US THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN STABILITY AND SECURITY. OUR VIEW OF A STABLE ENVIRONMENT IS ONE IN WHICH EACH SIDE IS FREE FROM THE FEAR OF SUDDEN ATTACK, ONE IN WHICH THE OTHER SIDE'S MILITARY ACTIVITIES ARE NEITHER PERCEIVED AS THREATENING NOR LIKELY TO TRIGGER A SPIRAL OF HOSTILE REACTIONS LEADING TO CONFRONTATION. THIS IS WHY NATO HAS EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO INCREASE OPENNESS IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES, REMOVE DESTABILIZING DISPARITIES, AND ELIMINATE THE CAPABILITY TO INITIATE SURPRISE OR

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LARGE-SCALE ATTACK.

IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL, WE WILL HAVE PASSED YET ANOTHER
MILESTONE, EQUIVALENT IN SIGNIFICANCE TO THE INF TREATY, ON
THE ROAD TO STABILITY.

END TEXT. WHITEHEAD
END OF MESSAGE

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